

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16512

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM VN
SUBJECT: VIETNAM FAMILY REUNIONS WITH AMERICAN CITIZENS

REF: STATE 137337

1. AS NOTED IN REFTEL WE HAVE ALSO DETECTED PROBLEMS
AND RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT DIFFICULTIES IN PROCESSING
EXIT VISAS AND LAISSEZ-PASSERS IN SAIGON. WE RECENTLY
CONSULTED WITH THE FRENCH CONSULAR OFFICER IN BANGKOK (BERNARD)
WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION CASES
ABOUT MEANS OF STREAMLINING PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN
OUR TWO OFFICES GIVEN CONTINUING AND RISING WORKLOADS. BERNARD
ADMITTED THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN BANGKOK HAD ONLY A VAGUE
IDEA OF WHAT WAS TRANSPIRING IN SAIGON BUT IT WAS EVIDENT THAT
CASES WERE BEING HELD UP AND A NUMBER OF CASES WERE BEING
DELAYED BECAUSE OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE CLERICAL PROBLEMS AND
OBSTACLES PLACED BY SRV AUTHORITIES. THIS VIEW WAS REINFORCED BY
COMMENTS BY UNHCR REP LESLIE GOODYEAR WHO INDICATED TO CONSULAR
SECTION CHIEF THAT ACCORDING TO DARRYL HAN WHO HAD RECENTLY
VISITED HANOI AND SAIGON THE FRENCH WERE BEING "LEANED UPON"
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BY THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES. GOODYEAR SUGGESTED THAT U S MISSION
GENEVA DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF HIS OBSERVATIONS WITH HAN SINCE
HE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO BE DEBRIEFED HERE.

2. BERNARD TOLD US THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY MAY NOT COMMUNICATE
DIRECTLY BY MAIL WITH THEIR OFFICE IN SAIGON AND THAT ALL MAIL
MUST BE ROUTED EITHER DIRECTLY FROM PARIS OR THROUGH HANOI.

MAIL BAGS ARE STRICTLY LIMITED TO 20 KGS AND EVEN A SLIGHT EXCESS CAUSES REJECTION BY THE SRV AUTHORITIES. BERNARD INDICATED THAT SAIGON PERSONNEL TRAVEL TO HANOI TO PICK UP BAGS BUT SEATS ARE FREQUENTLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN THUS ALSO HOLDING UP COMMUNICATIONS. IN ANY EVENT, BERNARD INDICATED THAT MAIL FROM BANGKOK TAKES FROM TEN DAYS TO TWO WEEKS TO REACH THE FRENCH CONSULATE. BERNARD ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD WRITTEN TO SAIGON FOLLOWING OUR DISCUSSIONS AND REQUESTED A GENERAL STATUS REPORT NOT ONLY ON THE AMERICAN CASES BUT ON THE FRENCH AND KOREAN CASES AS WELL. HE SAID THAT HE HAD SUGGESTED A PERSONAL MEETING WITH SAIGON CONSULAR PERSONNEL IF ANY CAME OUT ON LEAVE OR TRANSITTED BANGKOK IN ORDER TO EXPLORE THE PROBLEM.

3. CONCERNING INFO REQUESTED IN PARA 5 OF THE REFERENCE, WE HAVE FORWARDED OVER A THOUSAND CASES TO THE FRENCH IN VIETNAM OVER THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF. THE ONLY CASES WE REMEMBER HERE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE DEPARTMENT ARE THOSE RELATING TO THE MCGUIRE CHILD (B 13827 OF MAY 1978) AND THE MCCONNELL CASE (B 9895 OF MAY 1977 AND FOLLOWING CORRESPONDENCE). IF THE DEPARTMENT DESIRES STATUS ON THESE OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL CASES PLEASE FORWARD NAMES.

4. WE NOTE THAT BANGKOK HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING A MILD FLURRY OF LEGAL EXITS OF PEOPLE DESTINED FOR THE U S. IN THE PAST THREE FLIGHTS THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST ONE OR TWO CASES PER FLIGHT. AIR FRANCE HAS INFORMED US THAT ON JUNE 8 THEY EXPECTED TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ABLE TO EVACUATE 17 VIETNAMESE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR U S IMMIGRANT VISAS AND WHO HAVE RECEIVED THEIR DOCUMENTATION. HOWEVER, EVEN AS THE MESSAGE WAS BEING PREPARED, AIR FRANCE CONTACTED US TO TELL US THE 17 HAVE BEEN DELETED FOR THE JUNE 8 FLIGHT. AIR FRANCE EXPECTS THAT ONE FAMILY OF 6 WILL PROBABLY BE ON NEXT WEEK'S FLIGHT AND THE FAMILY OF 11 MAY MAKE IT IN JULY. THOUGH ALL CASES HAVE REFUGEE RELATIVES IN THE U S THE BASIC COMMON DENOMINATOR IN THESE CASES APPEARS TO BE THAT THEY ARE CHINESE OR SINO-VIETNAMESE. ALL WERE DOCUMENTED BY US TO THE FRENCH FOR ABOUT A YEAR.
WHITEHOUSE

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